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ABSTRACT

The General Accounting Office (GAO) surveyed current Senior Executive Service (SES) (highly placed government civil service) employees to obtain their views regarding their federal employment, including career plans, characteristics, and opinions. The results of the survey were obtained from 348 usable responses from a sample of 430 SES members selected randomly from 6,180 total career SES members. The survey showed that responding SES members were quite satisfied with some aspects of their jobs, such as personal fulfillment; the match between their jobs and their aptitudes, interests, and expectations; and the people with whom they worked. At the same time, however, the respondents expressed a high degree of dissatisfaction with the public's negative opinions of federal workers and various compensation-related issues. The survey showed that many respondents are interested in leaving SES. About 24 percent had sought, or planned to seek within the coming year, full-time employment outside the federal government. Half said they would accept an outside position if one were offered. About half of the respondents will be eligible for retirement in the next five years, and most intend to retire at that time or earlier if given the option. (The survey instrument is appended.) (KC)

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United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Fact Sheet for the Honorable
Vic Fazio, House of Representatives

July 1988

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

Executives' Perspectives on Their Federal Service

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United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

General Government Division
B-226026

July 20, 1988

The Honorable Vic Fazio
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Fazio:

At your request, we have examined the difficulties reportedly experienced by federal agencies in retaining members of the Senior Executive Service (SES). You were concerned that it was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain high-quality career staff in SES.

We agreed with your office to survey current and former SES members to obtain their views and experiences regarding their federal employment. In two earlier fact sheets (SES: Answers to Selected Salary-Related Questions, GAO/GGD-87-36FS, Jan. 9, 1987; and SES: Reasons Why Career Members Left in Fiscal Year 1985, GAO/GGD-87-106FS, Aug. 12, 1987) we reported the results of questionnaire surveys of SES members that, among other things, identified the reasons members cited for leaving their SES positions.

This fact sheet summarizes the results of a questionnaire sent to members who were serving in the SES in 1987 to obtain information about SES members' career plans, characteristics, and opinions regarding their federal service. Where pertinent, we contrast this latest survey with the responses of our surveys of former SES members who left in 1985 and SES members on board in December 1985.

The results of this survey were obtained from the 348 usable responses we received from a sample of 430 SES members selected randomly from the 6,180 total career members employed in the SES as of June 30, 1987. Statistically, the 348 usable responses represent 5,001 career SES members. A complete description of the objective, scope, and methodology of our survey is contained in appendix V.

RESULTS IN BRIEF

Generally, responding SES members were quite satisfied with some aspects of their jobs, such as the personal fulfillment their jobs provided; the match between their jobs and their

aptitudes, interests, and expectations; and the people with whom they worked. At the same time, however, these respondents expressed a high degree of dissatisfaction with others' negative opinions of federal workers and various compensation-related issues. About 90 percent were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the perceptions of federal workers by the press, politicians, and the public. At least 65 percent of the respondents cited dissatisfaction with several compensation-related issues, such as low salaries, proposed and actual cuts to benefits programs, and perceived inequities in SES bonus distributions.

In addition, about 65 percent of the respondents would advise or strongly advise someone beginning a career to choose the private sector. Only 13 percent would recommend public sector employment, and the remaining 22 percent were either uncertain or expressed no views on this topic.

Our survey showed that many respondents are interested in leaving SES. At the time these surveys were completed, between November and December 1987, 24 percent had sought within the previous year, or planned to seek within the coming year, full-time employment outside the federal government. Nearly 36 percent of the 348 respondents had been recruited for positions outside the federal government, and over half of the respondents said they were likely to accept a desirable position outside the federal government if one became available.

Half of the questionnaire respondents will be eligible to retire by 1992, and about 20 percent were eligible to retire as of December 1987. Of those eligible to retire as of this date, 54 percent indicated they planned to stay in SES 1 year or longer before retiring. Only 16 percent of those who were not yet eligible planned to stay at least 1 year after retirement eligibility.

By December 1988, about 46 percent of the respondents will be eligible for the early retirement that would be available if their jobs were abolished or if federal employment levels were reduced. About 47 percent of these respondents said that it was likely or very likely they would take advantage of early retirement if the opportunity arose.

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As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this fact sheet until 30 days from the issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the Office of Personnel Management and other interested parties upon request. If you need further information, please call me on 275-4232.

Sincerely yours,

Bernard L. Ungar
Associate Director

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Abbreviations

SES	Senior Executive Service
GAO	General Accounting Office

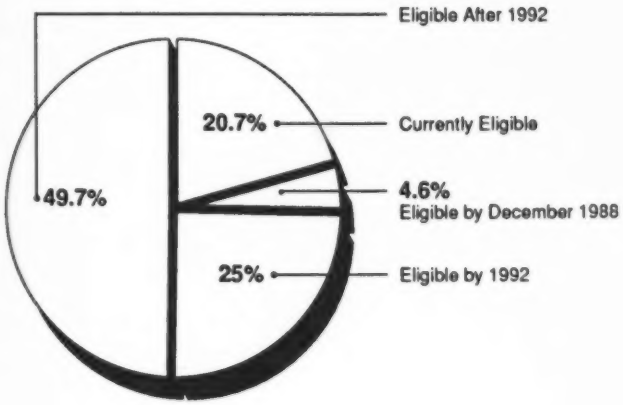
SES RESPONDENTS' CAREER PLANS AND OPINIONS OF THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENT

Many respondents informed us that they are eligible to retire, are seeking other employment, or have been contacted or recruited for positions outside the government.

HALF THE RESPONDENTS WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO RETIRE BY 1992

By 1992, half of the respondents will have met the age and length of service requirements for full retirement eligibility. As shown in Figure I.1, 20.7 percent of them were eligible to retire as of December 31, 1987. This percentage far exceeds that of the federal work force overall, where about 5.7 percent were eligible in June 1987.

Figure I.1: SES Respondents Eligible to Retire



Forty-six percent of the respondents were eligible for the early retirement that is permitted under certain circumstances, such as job abolishment or major reductions in force.

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Seventy-one percent of the SES members who retired in fiscal year 1985 remained in SES for at least 1 year after they became eligible to retire. Responses from our sample of SES members on board in 1987 indicated they are less likely to remain for this length of time. Only 54 percent of those currently eligible to retire said they planned to remain in SES for at least 1 more year. Only about 16 percent of those respondents who were not yet eligible to retire said they planned to remain in SES for 1 year or longer after they become eligible. About 31 percent of the members currently eligible to retire and 23 percent of those not yet eligible to retire were unsure of their retirement plans. See table I.1 for additional information on the retirement plans of SES members.

Table I.1: Plans to Remain in SES After Becoming Eligible to Retire

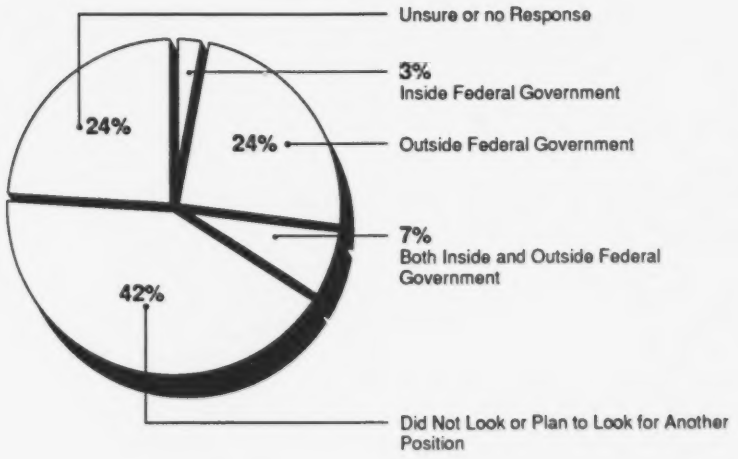
Length of time	Percentage of 1987 questionnaire respondents who are currently eligible to retire (72 respondents)	Percentage of 1987 questionnaire respondents who are not currently eligible to retire (276 respondents)
Less than 1 year	15.5	51.1
1 year to less than 3 years	38.0	8.8
3 years or more	15.5	6.9
Unsure	31.0	22.6
Leave before eligible	____	10.6
Total	100	100

MANY RESPONDENTS ARE INTERESTED IN OTHER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

According to the results of our questionnaire, about one-third to one half of the respondents are interested in leaving SES. These respondents are SES members who have either sought or planned to seek full-time employment outside SES, or members who would accept a desirable position outside the federal government or outside SES.

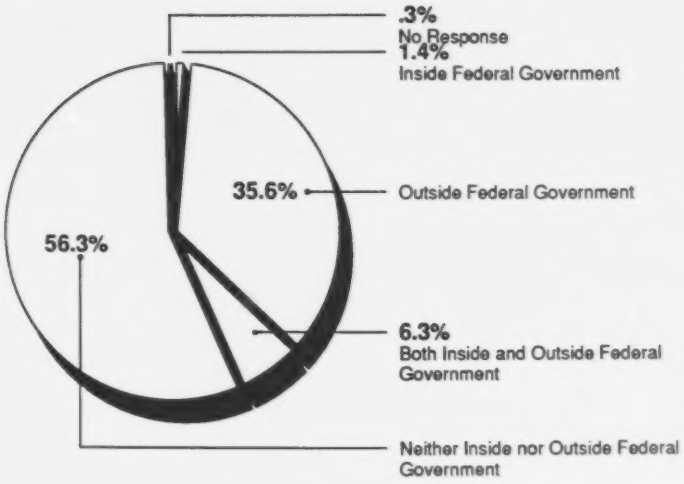
About 34 percent of the respondents said they had sought within the previous year, or planned to seek within the coming year, full-time employment outside SES. As indicated in figure I.2, 24 percent of the respondents were interested only in employment outside the federal government. Only 3 percent of the respondents were interested in other federal positions outside SES, such as general schedule positions, presidential appointments, or foreign service assignments. About 7 percent were interested in jobs either inside or outside the federal government.

Figure I.2: SES Respondents Who Sought Within the Previous Year, or Planned to Seek Within the Coming Year, Full-time Employment Outside SES



Questionnaire responses indicate that employers outside the federal government are interested in hiring SES members. Figure I.3 shows 35.6 percent of the respondents indicated they had been contacted or recruited for positions outside the federal government within the previous year. Less than 2 percent of the respondents said they had been contacted or recruited for positions outside SES, but inside the federal government. About 6 percent of the respondents said they had been contacted or recruited for both types of positions.

Figure I.3: SES Respondents Contacted or Recruited for Another Position



Fifty-two percent of the respondents said if they were offered desirable positions outside the federal government, they were either likely or very likely to accept. Similarly, about 27 percent of the respondents said they would accept positions outside SES, but inside the federal government.

RESPONDENTS' OPINIONS OF THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENT

SES members responding to our questionnaire were pleased with their jobs and what they did for a living. However, they were unhappy with their compensation and others' opinions of federal workers.

Factors causing dissatisfaction with the work environment

We identified 10 main sources of SES members' dissatisfaction with the work environment. Ninety percent of the respondents stated that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way the press, politicians, and the public perceive federal workers. This was their greatest source of dissatisfaction. Less than 2 percent of the respondents said they were satisfied with others' perceptions of federal workers, while no member responded that he/she was very satisfied with these perceptions.

Some respondents decided to provide narrative comments about SES employment and federal employment in general. Forty-four of the respondents described some of the concerns they have about how federal workers are perceived. One member commented that "as a nation, we need to stop denigrating public service, and we need leadership in that regard from both the White House and the Congress." Another member noted "the honorability of public service is in doubt. Our professionalism and dedication is often attacked by the world of press and politicians."

Various aspects of the SES compensation system accounted for six of the nine other main sources of dissatisfaction cited by the respondents. Dissatisfaction with salary levels and with proposed and actual salary adjustments were cited by 69.3 and 80.2 percent, respectively, of the respondents. The other compensation-related issues ranked among the top 10 sources of dissatisfaction dealt with bonuses and benefits. Table I.2 indicates the degree of dissatisfaction associated with these factors, as well as the other factors with which the respondents were most concerned.

Table I.2: 10 Most Important Factors Associated With SES Member's Dissatisfaction[a]

Factors	Dissatisfied and very dissatisfied			Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		
	Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[b]	Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[b]
Perceptions of federal workers by the press, politicians, and the public	314	90.2	4,513	25	7.2	359
Proposed and actual changes to salaries	279	80.2	4,010	50	14.4	719
Adequacy of salary	241	69.3	3,464	41	11.8	589
Proposed and actual changes to benefit programs (e.g., retirement)	234	67.2	3,363	91	26.1	1,308
Distribution of bonuses	227	65.2	3,262	60	17.2	862
Availability of bonuses	215	61.8	3,090	55	15.8	790
Ability to hire qualified staff	200	57.5	2,874	46	13.2	661
Working within the government's administrative system (e.g., paperwork, regulations)	201	57.8	2,889	83	23.9	1,193
Adequacy of staffing	187	53.7	2,688	39	11.2	561
Adequacy of fringe benefits	183	52.6	2,630	74	21.3	1,064

[a]Results in the table are based on 348 questionnaire respondents, and can be projected to 5,001 SES members in the universe.

[b]Sampling errors do not exceed 5 percent for these numbers.

APPENDIX I

Satisfied and very satisfied			Did not respond		
Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[b]	Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[b]
5	1.4	72	4	1.1	57
15	4.3	216	4	1.1	57
65	18.7	934	1	0.3	14
18	5.2	259	5	1.4	72
58	16.7	834	3	0.9	43
75	21.6	1,078	3	0.9	43
102	29.3	1,466	0	0.0	0
61	17.5	877	3	0.9	43
121	34.8	1,739	1	0.3	14
88	25.3	1,265	3	0.9	43

Most of the questionnaire comments we received dealt with compensation-related issues. For example, 84 SES members commented on salary, benefits, or retirement issues. One member said "I'm fed up with the absolutely inadequate salary and benefits provided by SES and see no way it will improve. Thus, I'm leaving within the next year." Another member commented that "job satisfaction provides a tolerance factor which for many of us is being rapidly eroded by the constant raids on the pension benefits we were promised when we elected a career in the federal service."

Forty-two members commented on SES bonuses or Presidential rank awards. One member, expressing dissatisfaction with the adequacy of bonuses, commented that "my counterparts in private industry . . . pay more in taxes on their bonuses than I receive as a bonus." Another member indicated the bonus system was unfair, saying "awards are based on politics not merit."

The remaining 3 of the top 10 sources of dissatisfaction cited by respondents were inadequate staffing in their agencies, inability to hire qualified staff, and the government's administrative system (e.g., paperwork, regulations). Each of the top 10 dissatisfactions was cited by more than half of the respondents. Additionally, 34 percent of the respondents believed their overall work environment had worsened during the previous year.

We compared the responses provided to our 1987 questionnaire with those provided to the questionnaires we sent to SES members who were employed in 1985. For 6 of the top 10 sources of dissatisfaction, there were no statistically significant differences between responses of members employed in 1985 and members who were employed in 1987. However, there were significant differences between the responses given by these groups for four sources of dissatisfaction. The 1987 members were more dissatisfied than the members employed in 1985 with their salaries, the distribution of bonuses, and working within the government's administrative system. The 1987 members were less dissatisfied than the 1985 members with proposed and actual changes to benefits. The differences among these groups of respondents are shown in table I.3.

Table I.3: Statistically Significant Differences Between Questionnaire Responses of SES Members Employed in 1987 and Those Employed in 1985

Source of dissatisfaction	Percent of 1985 respondents	Percent of 1987 respondents
Distribution of bonuses	55.0	65.2
Working within the government's administrative system (e.g., paperwork and regulations)	48.3	57.8
Salary	61.4	69.3
Proposed and actual changes to benefits	81.2	67.2

We also compared the questionnaire responses provided by 1987 members with those provided to the questionnaires we sent to former members who left SES in 1985. Comparison of the top 10 sources of dissatisfaction listed by 1987 respondents and the top 10 reasons for leaving cited by former members who left SES in 1985 show some common concerns. Both groups of members were concerned with the way federal workers are perceived, the availability of bonuses, and the distribution of bonuses.

Factors causing satisfaction with the work environment

About 60 percent or more of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the personal fulfillment offered by their jobs. These members indicated a high degree of satisfaction with some factors, such as the match between their jobs and their personal aptitudes, abilities, and interests; the match between their jobs and their expectations; and the match between their personal goals and values and those of their organizations. The respondents generally felt they had freedom to manage as they saw fit and that training, travel, and equipment were available and adequate. Job security was also mentioned as one of the main satisfactions.

SES members' comments also reflected their satisfaction with the fulfillment offered by their jobs. Twenty-seven members commented that they enjoyed their careers. This sense of

enjoyment and fulfillment was exemplified in the comments of two members. One commented "my particular job is tremendously challenging and rewarding in its impact and importance and from that aspect I find self-fulfillment." Another commented ". . . we like our jobs and feel fulfilled for our efforts. This has little to do with SES ratings, compensation or bonuses, all of which are inadequate."

The respondents were generally satisfied with the competence of staff at their agencies. Three of the 10 most frequently cited sources of satisfaction with the SES and federal employment in general dealt with the competence of agency staff. The respondents reported satisfaction with their co-workers' competence more frequently than any other source of satisfaction. Also, a significant majority of the respondents noted satisfaction with their supervisors and their subordinate staff. Table I.4 indicates the degree of satisfaction these members expressed regarding job fulfillment and agency staff competence.

Table I.4: 10 Most Important Factors Associated With SES Member's Satisfaction[a]

Factors	Satisfied and very satisfied			Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		
	Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[b]	Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[b]
Co-workers	273	78.4	3,924	48	13.8	690
Match between aptitude, abilities, or interests and those the job requires	263	75.6	3,780	45	12.9	647
Supervisor	256	73.6	3,679	41	11.8	589
Subordinate staff	255	73.3	3,665	41	11.8	589
Job security	227	65.2	3,262	94	27.0	1,351
Amount of freedom to manage as seen fit	236	67.8	3,392	42	12.1	604
Match between expectations of the job and the reality of the job	219	62.9	3,147	67	19.3	963
Availability of funding for training, travel, etc.	207	59.5	2,975	58	16.7	834
Adequacy of equipment provided to accomplish job	205	58.9	2,946	65	18.7	934
Match between personal goals and values and those of the organization	206	59.2	2,961	73	21.0	1,049

[a]Results in the table are based on 348 questionnaire respondents and can be projected to 5,001 SES members in the universe.

[b]Sampling errors do not exceed 5 percent for these numbers.

APPENDIX I

Dissatisfied and very dissatisfied			Did not respond		
Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[b]	Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[b]
23	6.6	331	4	1.1	57
37	10.6	532	3	0.9	43
47	13.5	675	4	1.1	57
50	14.4	719	2	0.6	29
25	7.2	359	2	0.6	29
67	19.3	963	3	0.9	43
59	17.0	848	3	0.9	43
81	23.3	1,164	2	0.6	29
76	21.8	1,092	2	0.6	29
65	18.7	934	4	1.1	57

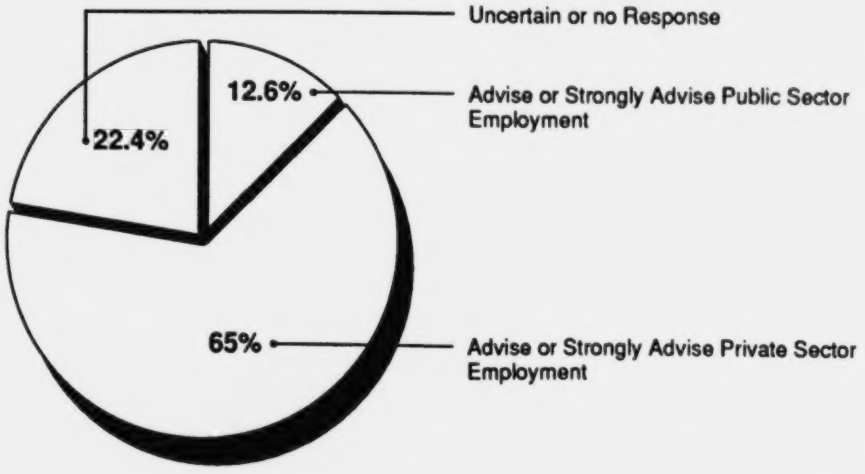
Three of the top 10 sources of satisfaction--co-workers, subordinates, and job security--were also among the 10 least important reasons for leaving the SES as indicated by SES members who left in fiscal year 1985.

A majority (57.5 percent) of the 1987 respondents expressed satisfaction with the competence of top management. Top management was not viewed as positively by the SES members who left in fiscal year 1985. In fact, they said dissatisfaction with top management was the most important reason for leaving the SES. About 47.3 percent of the SES members who left in 1985 reported their dissatisfaction with top management was of great or very great importance in their decision to leave SES.

MOST RESPONDENTS RECOMMENDED PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYMENT

Despite a sense of fulfillment expressed by many respondents, the majority stated they would recommend private sector employment over public sector employment. Figure I.4 shows 65 percent said they would advise or strongly advise private sector employment to someone beginning a career. Public sector employment was recommended by 12.6 percent of the respondents, while the remaining 22.4 percent were either uncertain or did not respond.

Figure I.4: SES Respondents' Advice on Beginning a Career in the Private Sector or the Public Service



We received similar responses from SES members employed in 1985 and those who left in fiscal year 1985. In each survey, the majority of the respondents--almost 75 percent of those employed in 1985 and 66 percent of those who left in 1985--said they would recommend private sector employment.

Comments made by 19 of the respondents to our 1987 survey elaborated on their recommendations that private sector is preferable to public sector employment. One member explained "I advise the private sector over the public sector with great regret. The public service should be a source of great pride to its employees, but it is not." Another member said "Up until the last few years, I would have encouraged others to pursue a career in public service [but] this is no longer the case."

APPENDIX II

OPINIONS ON THE WORK ENVIRONMENT DIFFER AMONG CERTAIN GROUPS OF SES MEMBERS

Opinions on the work environment differed among certain groups of respondents. Respondents who were interested in leaving SES were less satisfied than their peers with several aspects of the work environment, most commonly relating to compensation. Tables II.1 and II.2 describe these differences. Respondents whom we considered as interested in leaving SES included those who looked or planned to look for employment outside SES (table II.1) and those who were likely to accept a desirable job outside SES (table II.2). Differences between respondents interested in leaving and respondents who are not interested in leaving are shown in these tables.

Table II.1: 10 Sources of Dissatisfaction With the Greatest Differences Between Respondents Who Looked or Planned to Look for a Position Outside SES and Those Who Had Not Looked or Planned to Look for Such a Position

Work environment factor	Looked or planned to look[a] Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[c]
Distribution of Presidential rank awards	79	66.4	1,135
Availability of Presidential rank awards	74	62.2	1,064
Opportunities for career advancement (i.e., higher level of responsibility)	49	41.2	704
Availability of desired assignments	46	38.7	661
Proposed and actual changes to benefit programs (i.e., retirement)	94	79.0	1,351
Distribution of bonuses	92	77.3	1,322
Involvement in agency's decisionmaking process	44	37.0	632
Availability of bonuses	85	71.4	1,222
Match between personal goals and values and those of the organization	36	30.3	517
Adequacy of salary	94	79.0	1,351

[a]Results in these columns are based on 119 questionnaire respondents and can be projected to 1,710 SES members in the universe.

[b]Results in these columns are based on 147 questionnaire respondents and can be projected to 2,113 SES members in the universe.

[c]Sampling errors do not exceed 9 percent for these numbers.

[d]These differences were found to be statistically significant using the z-statistic to test for the significance of difference between two proportions.

APPENDIX II

Did not look and do not plan to look[b]			
Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[c]	Difference in percentages[d]
56	38.1	805	28.3
51	34.7	733	27.5
22	15.0	316	26.2
21	14.3	302	24.4
84	57.1	1,207	21.9
83	56.5	1,193	20.8
26	17.7	374	19.3
77	52.4	1,107	19.0
17	11.6	244	18.7
89	60.5	1,279	18.5

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Table II.2: 10 Sources of Dissatisfaction With the Greatest Differences Between Respondents Likely to Accept a Position Outside SES and Those Who Were Unlikely to Accept Such a Position

Work environment factor	Would accept[a] Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[c]
Availability of bonuses	146	69.5	2,098
Distribution of bonuses	152	72.4	2,185
Distribution of Presidential rank awards	129	61.4	1,854
Availability of desired assignments	69	32.9	992
Availability of Presidential rank awards	124	59.0	1,782
Adequacy of salary	158	75.2	2,271
Opportunities for career advancement (i.e., higher level of responsibility)	78	37.1	1,121
Involvement in agency's decisionmaking process	73	34.8	1,049
Adequacy of fringe benefits	120	57.1	1,725
Proposed and actual changes to benefit programs (i.e., retirement)	149	71.0	2141

[a]Results in these columns are based on 210 questionnaire respondents and can be projected to 3,018 SES members in the universe.

[b]Results in these columns are based on 48 questionnaire respondents and can be projected to 690 SES members in the universe.

[c]Sampling errors do not exceed 7 percent for these numbers.

[d]Sampling error is between 11 percent and 15 percent.

[e]These differences were found to be statistically significant using the z-statistic to test for the significance of difference between two proportions.

APPENDIX II

Would not accept[b]			
Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[d]	Difference in percentages[e]
16	33.3	230	36.2
18	37.5	259	34.9
13	27.1	187	34.3
0	0.0	0	32.9
13	27.1	187	31.9
21	43.8	302	31.4
4	8.3	57	28.8
4	8.3	57	26.5
17	35.4	244	21.7
24	50.0	345	21.0

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APPENDIX II

Respondents who were not interested in leaving SES were significantly more satisfied than their peers with several aspects of the work environment. These aspects ranged from career advancement opportunities to the freedom to manage their jobs as they saw fit. The 10 sources of satisfaction with the greatest differences for each group are shown in tables II.3 and II.4.

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Table II.3: 10 Sources of Satisfaction With the Greatest Differences Between Respondents Who Looked or Planned to Look for Positions Outside SES and Those Who Had Not Looked or Planed to Look for Such a Position

	Did and do not plan to look[a]		
Work environment factor	Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[c]
Match between personal goals and values and those of the organization	100	68.0	1,437
Involvement in agency's decisionmaking process	90	61.2	1,293
Communications in the agency	78	53.1	1,121
General agency policies	81	55.1	1,164
Ability to retain qualified staff	60	40.8	862
Match between expectations of the job and the reality of the job	100	68.0	1,437
Availability of desired assignments	76	51.7	1,092
Opportunities for career advancement (i.e., higher level of responsibility)	69	46.9	992
Job security	105	71.4	1,509
Adequacy of salary	38	25.9	546

[a]Results in these columns are based on 147 questionnaire respondents and can be projected to 2,113 SES members in the universe.

[b]Results in these columns are based on 119 questionnaire respondents and can be projected to 1,710 SES members in the universe.

[c]Sampling errors do not exceed 9 percent for these numbers.

[d]These differences were found to be statistically significant using the z-statistic to test for the significance of difference between two proportions.

APPENDIX II

Looked or planned to look[b]			
Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[c]	Difference in percentages[d]
55	46.2	790	21.8
47	39.5	675	21.7
39	32.8	561	20.3
43	36.1	618	19.0
27	22.7	388	18.1
60	50.4	862	17.6
42	35.3	604	16.4
38	31.9	546	15.0
68	57.1	977	14.3
14	11.8	201	14.1

APPENDIX II

Table II.4: 10 Sources of Satisfaction With the Greatest Differences Between Respondents Likely to Accept a Position Outside the SES and Those Who Were Unlikely to Accept Such a Position

Work environment factor	Would not accept[a]		
	Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[d]
Match between expectations of the job and the reality of the job	43	89.6	618
Opportunities for career advancement (i.e., higher level of responsibility)	33	68.8	474
Availability of desired assignments	31	64.6	446
Involvement in agency's decisionmaking process	35	72.9	503
Match between personal goals and values and those of the organization	38	79.2	546
Availability of bonuses	21	43.8	302
Opportunities for career development (i.e., growing through the job)	35	72.9	503
Distribution of Presidential rank awards	16	33.3	230
Distribution of bonuses	18	37.5	259
Amount of freedom to manage job as seen fit	41	85.4	589

[a]Results in these columns are based on 48 questionnaire respondents and can be projected to 690 SES members in the universe.

[b]Results in these columns are based on 210 questionnaire respondents and can be projected to 3,018 SES members in the universe.

[c]Sampling errors do not exceed 7 percent for these numbers.

[d]Sampling error is between 10 percent and 15 percent.

[e]These differences were found to be statistically significant using the z-statistic to test for the significance of difference between two proportions.

APPENDIX II

Would accept[b]			
Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[c]	Difference in percentages[e]
107	51.0	1,538	38.6
64	30.5	920	38.3
73	34.8	1,049	29.8
91	43.3	1,308	29.6
108	51.4	1,552	27.8
36	17.1	517	26.7
98	46.7	1,408	26.2
17	8.1	244	25.2
29	13.8	417	23.7
131	62.4	1,883	23.0

The respondents' advice regarding public or private sector employment also differed between certain groups of members. Those who were interested in leaving SES were more likely to recommend private sector employment.

PROFILE OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

SES members on board in 1987 who responded to our questionnaire are well educated and have a great deal of federal experience in general and SES experience in particular. Two-thirds of them are located in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Table III.1 shows the most common characteristics of these SES members.

Table III.1: Most Common Characteristics of Questionnaire Respondents

Highest educational level:	Masters degree
Years of federal experience:	20 to less than 25
Years of executive experience:	5 to less than 10
Age:	45 to 55 years
Occupation:	Administrative or managerial
Geographic location:	Washington, D.C.

EDUCATION

All questionnaire respondents had at least some college education; 98 percent had a bachelor's degree, and more than two-thirds have received advanced degrees. More than one-third received a Ph.D., M.D., or law degree (J.D.).

Table III.2: Educational Level of 1987 SES Members

Highest educational level or degree attained	Number of respondents	Percent[a]	Projected number of SES members[b]
High school graduate or equivalent	0	0.0	0
Associate's degree or some college without a bachelor's degree	7	2.0	100
Graduated from a 4-year college or postgraduate study without a degree	100	28.7	1,437
Master's degree	111	31.9	1,595
Doctorate or Ph.D.	69	19.8	992
Law degree	53	15.2	762
Medical degree	5	1.4	72
Other	2	0.6	29
No response	1	0.3	14
Total	348	99.9	5,001

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

[b]Sampling errors do not exceed 5 percent for these numbers.

EXPERIENCE

About two-thirds of the respondents have served the federal government as civilians for 20 years or more. Also, more than half of the respondents had served in the military.

Table III.3: Years of Federal Service for 1987 SES Members[a]

Years of federal service	Number of respondents	Percent	Projected number of SES members[b]
Less than 3 years	5	1.4	72
3 to less than 5 years	2	0.6	29
5 to less than 10 years	7	2.0	101
10 to less than 15 years	35	10.1	503
15 to less than 20 years	68	19.5	977
20 to less than 25 years	101	29.0	1,452
25 to less than 30 years	78	22.4	1,121
30 years or more	51	14.7	733
No response	1	0.3	14
Total	348	100	5,001

[a]Excluding military service.

[b]Sampling errors do not exceed 5 percent for these numbers.

Most of the respondents entered federal service at or below the GS-9 level, and most had reached the ES-4 level, which is the middle level of the SES. The majority had been in an executive position for at least 5 years; almost one-third of these members had been in an executive position for 10 years or more.

Table III.4: Years of Federal Executive Service for 1987 SES Members

Years of service in a federal executive position	Number of respondents	Percent[a]	Projected number of SES members[b]
Less than 1 year	17	4.9	244
1 to less than 3 years	63	18.1	905
3 to less than 5 years	47	13.5	675
5 to less than 10 years	111	31.9	1,595
10 to less than 15 years	61	17.5	877
15 to less than 20 years	32	9.2	460
20 years or more	13	3.7	187
No response	4	1.1	57
Total	348	99.9	5,001

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

[b]Sampling errors do not exceed 5 percent for these numbers.

AGE

The majority of the respondents are over age 50, the average age being about 52.

Table III.5: Ages of 1987 SES Members

Age in years	Number of respondents	Percent[a]	Projected number of SES members[b]
Less than 35	0	0.0	0
35 to less than 40	11	3.2	158
40 to less than 45	48	13.8	690
45 to less than 50	90	25.9	1,293
50 to less than 55	90	25.9	1,293
55 to less than 60	50	14.4	719
60 to less than 62	16	4.6	230
62 to less than 65	12	3.5	172
65 or over	24	6.9	345
No response	7	2.0	101
Total	348	100.2	5,001

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

[b]Sampling errors do not exceed 5 percent for these numbers.

APPENDIX III

OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND

Occupational background and training varied across several fields; however, most respondents listed their current occupational field as administration or management. The second most frequently cited occupational field was engineering or architecture.

Table III.6: Occupational Makeup of 1987 SES Members

Occupational category	Number of respondents	Percent[a]	Projected number of SES members[b]
Accounting, budgeting, or finance	17	4.9	244
Administrative/ managerial	178	51.1	2,558
Business	4	1.1	57
Engineering or architecture	40	11.5	575
Investigations	2	0.6	29
Legal	30	8.6	431
Math or statistics	4	1.1	57
Medical sciences	6	1.7	86
Personnel management or industrial relations	4	1.1	57
Physical sciences	18	5.2	259
Social science, economics, psychology or social welfare	8	2.3	115
Other	33	9.5	474
No response	4	1.1	57
Total	348	99.8	5,001

[a]Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

[b]Sampling errors do not exceed 5 percent for these numbers.

BONUSES

About 65 percent of the respondents said they had received SES bonuses. At the time our questionnaire was completed, between November and December 1987, almost 6 percent said they received bonuses in at least 6 of the 8 years in which bonuses had been paid.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ATTRITION

Since 1980, the first full year of available data, SES yearly attrition has varied greatly. The highest annual attrition rate occurred in 1980, when 14.6 percent of career SES members resigned, retired, or otherwise left their positions. The last full year of data, 1987, saw the lowest rate of attrition, 6 percent. Table IV.1 summarizes this information, and figure IV.1 depicts the trends.

APPENDIX IV

Table IV.1: Career SES Members Who Left SES Between 1980 and 1987

Calendar year	Average number of SES members	Resignations	
		Number	Percent
1980	6,347	162	2.6
1981	6,198	320	5.2
1982	6,044	221	3.6
1983	6,164	153	2.5
1984	6,254	166	2.7
1985	6,208	164	2.6
1986	6,113	140	2.3
1987	6,180	107	1.7
Total		1,433	
Average	6,189	179	2.9

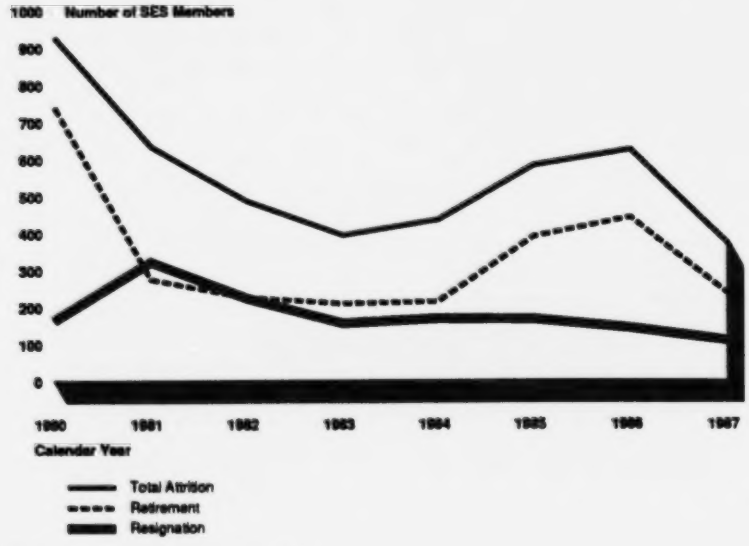
Source: Office of Personnel Management.

APPENDIX IV

How Members Left SES

Retirements		Other		Total	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
738	11.6	26	0.4	926	14.6
273	4.4	40	0.6	633	10.2
223	3.7	40	0.7	484	8.0
206	3.3	32	0.5	391	6.3
212	3.4	55	0.9	433	6.9
388	6.3	28	0.4	580	9.3
440	7.2	43	0.7	623	10.2
236	3.8	29	0.5	372	6.0
2,716		293		4,442	
340	5.5	37	0.6	555	9.0

Figure IV.1: SES Attrition from 1980 to 1987



Source: Office of Personnel Management

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this questionnaire survey was to obtain information on SES career members' characteristics, career plans, and opinions regarding their federal service. Using a structured mail survey, we asked the members about their attitudes toward SES, their career plans, and their levels of satisfaction with various aspects of federal employment. Because we were primarily dealing with the perceptions of SES members, we could not verify the accuracy of the information provided.

This is the third survey done by GAO to determine SES members' attitudes toward federal employment. In 1986 we sent questionnaires to two groups of SES members; the first survey went to all members who left SES or the federal government during fiscal year 1985; and the second went to a sample of SES members on board as of December 31, 1985. We updated information on the latter survey with the current survey, which sent questionnaires to randomly selected SES career members employed by the federal government as of June 30, 1987.

INSTRUMENT VALIDATION, DATA COLLECTION, AND VERIFICATION

In designing the questionnaire instruments for each of the surveys, we reviewed other questionnaires, including those previously used to collect data from SES members by the Office of Personnel Management, the Merit Systems Protection Board, and the Federal Executive Institute Alumni Association. We considered questions asked in these questionnaires and added some of our own. In particular, we tried to capture all possible sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the work environment. To ensure that our questionnaires were easily understandable, we pretested them with former and current SES members before sending them out. We tried to make the surveys as similar as possible to facilitate comparisons.

Data for the current SES survey were collected during November and December 1987. We edited the completed questionnaires for consistency and verified the accuracy of our computer data.

SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

For the current survey, we selected a simple random sample of 430 SES members out of a total SES population of 6,180.[1] This sample was designed so that we could project our results to the universe of SES members.

Because this survey selected a portion of the universe for review, the results obtained are subject to some imprecision, or sampling error. We chose the specific sample size so that the sampling error would not be greater than 5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that if all SES members who were on board in June 1987 had been surveyed, the chances are 19 out of 20 that the results obtained would not differ from our sample estimates by more than 5 percent.

For the earlier survey of SES members on board as of December 31, 1985, we sampled 380 of 5,463 members employed at that time. Similar confidence parameters also apply to this sample.

Significant differences in responses to the December 1985 and June 1987 surveys do not necessarily mean that an individual's views changed over time, because the two samples were selected independently. Therefore, the projections provide a snapshot of SES members' views on the respective dates of the surveys.

As described in our August 1987 report, the survey of members who left SES in fiscal year 1985 included the entire universe of 615 members who left during the year, and there is no sampling error associated with those results.

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[1]Originally, we selected 480 SES members to receive questionnaires, but we found 50 members had already been selected to participate in another unrelated study. We eliminated these 50 members so they would not be burdened with completing two questionnaires. Because the reason for dropping the 50 members was unrelated to the topics addressed in the third questionnaire, we do not believe that the validity of the results was affected.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATES

Response rates exceeded 75 percent for all three questionnaires. Table V.1 summarizes the questionnaire returns.

Table V.1: Questionnaire Returns

Types of returns	SES members as of June 1987		SES members as of December 1985		Former SES members	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Usable returns	348	80.9	298	78.4	469	76.2
Undeliverable	19	4.4	17	4.5	19	3.1
Ineligible[a]	12	2.8	14	3.7	21	3.4
Refused to respond	1	0.2	0	0.0	2	0.3
Delivered but not returned	50	11.6	51	13.4	104	16.9
Total[b]	430	99.9	380	100.0	615	99.9

[a]Includes SES members who had died, retired, or resigned since we chose our sample.

[b]Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

ESTIMATES FROM THE SAMPLE RESULTS

Since each response provided by an SES member in our sample represents a larger number of SES members, the responses have been weighted to project to the universe of SES members. We calculated the weighting factor by dividing the universe size by the sample size (6,180/430 = 14.37). Therefore, the responses of a single SES member represent those of 14.37 SES members in the universe. Because of the possibility that SES members who did not respond to the survey differed from those who did respond, we can project our results only to the respondent portion of the universe. Our usable response rate was 80.9 percent; therefore, the statements in this report that are based on the 348 individuals who responded to our questionnaire can be projected to 5,001 SES members (80.9 percent of the SES universe on June 30, 1987).

APPENDIX VI

ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE

____ (1-4)

U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

SURVEY OF SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE RETENTION AND ATTRITION

CURRENT SES MEMBERS

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), an agency of Congress, is reviewing trends in Senior Executive Service (SES) attrition and the outlook for future retention of its members. This questionnaire is being sent to a sample of current SES members to obtain their views concerning SES and future career plans.

Most of the questions can be easily answered by checking boxes or filling in blanks. Space has been provided for any additional comments at the end of the questionnaire. If necessary, additional pages may be attached.

Your responses will be treated confidentially. They will be combined with others and reported only in summary form. The questionnaire is numbered to aid us in our follow-up efforts and will not be used to identify you with your responses. We cannot develop meaningful information without your frank and honest answers.

The questionnaire should take about 20 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, please call Mr. William Reinsberg on FTS 275-5738 or (202) 275-5738.

Please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope within 10 days of receipt. In the event the envelope is misplaced, the return address is:

U.S. General Accounting Office
Mr. William Reinsberg
Room 3150
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Thank you for your help.

348 SES members responded.

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

1. What is the highest educational level or degree that you have attained? (CHECK ONE.) (5-6)

   1. 0 High school graduate or equivalent
   2. 6 Some college without a bachelor's degree
   3. 1 Associate degree from a 2-year college
   4. 100 Graduated from a 4-year college
   5. 111 Master's degree
   6. 69 Doctorate/Ph.D.
   7. 53 Law degree
   8. 5 Medical degree
   9. 2 Other, please specify _____

   1 Did not respond

2. How long have you worked in the federal government (excluding military service)? (CHECK ONE.) (7)

   1. 5 Fewer than 3 years
   2. 2 3 to less than 5 years
   3. 7 5 to less than 10 years
   4. 35 10 to less than 15 years
   5. 68 15 to less than 20 years
   6. 101 20 to less than 25 years
   7. 78 25 to less than 30 years
   8. 51 30 years or more

   1 Did not respond

APPENDIX VI

3. How many years and months of active duty military service, if any, did you serve? (IF NONE, ENTER ZERO "0".)

RANGE 0.0 YRS - 38 YRS 6 MOS.

MEAN 2 (YEARS) AND 3 (MONTHS) (8-11)

4. What was your grade or ES level when you joined the federal government as a civilian? ES-1 to ES-6

RANGE GS-1 to GS-18

MEAN GS-9 (GRADE LEVEL) OR ES-3 (ES LEVEL) (12-14)

5. What was your age as of your last birthday?

RANGE 36-77 YRS

MEAN 52 (YEARS) (15-16)

II. SES EXPERIENCE

The following two questions are intended to allow for a comparison of your overall training or background prior to entering SES and the kind of work you currently perform in your SES position.

6. Of the following occupational categories, which one best describes your overall background (based on your education, training, and skills) prior to entering SES? (CHECK ONE.) (17-18)

1. 30 Accounting, budgeting, or finance
2. 64 Administrative/managerial
3. 9 Business
4. 81 Engineering or architecture
5. 7 Investigations
6. 37 Legal
7. 7 Math or statistics
8. 11 Medical sciences
9. 5 Personnel management or industrial relations
10. 37 Physical sciences
11. 19 Social science, economics, psychology, or social welfare
12. 37 Other, please specify _____

4 Did not respond

7. Of the following occupational categories, which one best describes the work you currently perform in your SES position? (CHECK ONE.) (19-20)

1. 17 Accounting, budgeting, or finance
2. 178 Administrative/managerial
3. 4 Business
4. 40 Engineering or architecture
5. 2 Investigations
6. 30 Legal
7. 4 Math or statistics
8. 6 Medical sciences
9. 4 Personnel management or industrial relations
10. 18 Physical sciences
11. 8 Social science, economics, psychology, or social welfare
12. 33 Other, please specify _____

4 Did not respond

APPENDIX VI

8. How long have you been in an executive position in the federal government (SES or GS-16, 17, 18 or equivalent)? (CHECK ONE.) (21)

   1. 17 Less than 1 year
   2. 63 1 to less than 3 years
   3. 47 3 to less than 5 years
   4. 111 5 to less than 10 years
   5. 61 10 to less than 15 years
   6. 32 15 to less than 20 years
   7. 13 20 years or more

   4 Did not respond

9. What is your current ES level?

   _____ (22)
   (ES LEVEL)

10. In which federal agency are you currently working?

    _____
    (AGENCY) (23-25)

11. What is the geographical location of your present SES position? (CHECK ONE.) (26)

    1. 239 Washington, D.C. metropolitan area
    2. 106 Other, please specify _____

    3 Did not respond

12. Since the inception of SES in 1979, how many SES bonuses, if any, have you received? (CHECK ONE.) (27)

    1. 121 None
    2. 67 1 bonus
    3. 56 2 bonuses
    4. 36 3 bonuses
    5. 25 4 bonuses
    6. 17 5 bonuses
    7. 20 6 or more bonuses

    6 Did not respond

13. How many government-wide meritorious and distinguished Presidential rank awards have you received in your SES career? (CHECK ONE.) (28)

    1. 291 None
    2. 43 1 award
    3. 7 2 awards
    4. 2 3 awards
    5. 0 4 or more awards

    5 Did not respond

APPENDIX VI

III. FUTURE CAREER PLANS

14. Are you currently seeking or have you sought full-time employment outside SES (either inside or outside the federal government) in the past 12 months? (CHECK ONE.) (29)

1. 50 Yes, outside the federal government
2. 9 Yes, inside the federal government → (SKIP TO QUESTION 16.)
3. 12 Yes, both inside and outside the federal government
4. 272 No → (CONTINUE WITH QUESTION 15.)

5 Did not respond

15. Are you planning to seek full-time employment outside SES (either inside or outside the federal government) in the next 12 months? (CHECK ONE.) (30)

1. 35 Yes, outside the federal government
2. 1 Yes, inside the federal government
3. 12 Yes, both inside and outside the federal government
4. 147 No
5. 80 Unsure

2 Did not respond
71 Skipped to #16

16. Have you been recruited or contacted for a full-time position outside SES (either inside or outside the federal government) within the past 12 months? (CHECK ONE.) (31)

1. 124 Yes, outside the federal government
2. 5 Yes, inside the federal government
3. 22 Yes, both inside and outside the federal government
4. 196 No

1 Did not respond

17. If a desirable full-time position outside SES, but within the federal government (e.g., general schedule, presidential appointment, foreign service, etc.) is offered to you within the next 12 months, how likely or unlikely is it that you would accept it? (CHECK ONE.) (32)

1. 34 Very likely
2. 56 Likely
3. 114 Unsure if I would accept
4. 82 Unlikely
5. 57 Very unlikely

3 Did not respond

18. If a desirable full-time position outside the federal government is offered to you within the next 12 months, how likely or unlikely is it that you would accept it? (CHECK ONE.) (33)

1. 83 Very likely
2. 98 Likely
3. 88 Unsure if I would accept
4. 48 Unlikely
5. 28 Very unlikely

3 Did not respond

APPENDIX VI

19. Please refer to the eligibility requirements for regular retirement, specified below, before answering this question. Answer the question based on the eligibility requirements of the retirement system under which you are currently covered.

In how many months or years will you become eligible for regular retirement from federal service? (CHECK ONE.) (34-35)

1. 72 Currently eligible to retire → (SKIP TO QUESTION 23.)

2. 7 Less than 6 months
3. 9 6 months to less than 1 year
4. 47 1 to less than 3 years
5. 40 3 to less than 5 years
6. 87 5 to less than 10 years
7. 64 10 to less than 15 years
8. 19 15 to less than 20 years
9. 3 20 years or more

→ (CONTINUE WITH QUESTION 20.)

0 Did not respond

20. In addition to regular retirement, employees may retire sooner under certain circumstances (e.g., RIFs). This discontinued service is commonly known as "early-out retirement."

Eligibility for early-out retirement is: age 50 with 20 years of service; or any age with 25 years of service.

If you become eligible for early-out retirement in the next 12 months and it is offered to you, how likely or unlikely is it that you would take it? (CHECK ONE.) (36)

1. 112 I would not be eligible for early-out retirement in the next 12 months

2. 40 Very likely
3. 35 Likely
4. 47 Uncertain
5. 21 Unlikely
6. 18 Very unlikely

3 Did not respond

72 skipped from Q19

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR REGULAR RETIREMENT

Under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS), minimum eligibility for regular retirement (without special requirements) is:

age 55 with 30 years of service;
age 60 with 20 years of service; or
age 62 with 5 years of service.

Under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), for those hired after December 31, 1983 or those who elect to transfer, the minimum eligibility for regular retirement (without special requirements) is:

age 60 with 20 years of service;
age 62 with 5 years of service; or
the following minimum retirement ages after 30 years of service:

If your year of birth is:	Your minimum retirement age is:
Before 1948	55
1948	55 and 2 months
1949	55 and 4 months
1950	55 and 6 months
1951	55 and 8 months
1952	55 and 10 months
1953 - 1964	56
1965	56 and 2 months
1966	56 and 4 months
1967	56 and 6 months
1968	56 and 8 months
1969	56 and 10 months
1970 and after	57

APPENDIX VI

21. There has been discussion in Congress regarding legislation to temporarily change the eligibility requirements for retirement through discontinued service ("early-out retirement").

In addition to the existing eligibility requirements of age 50 with 20 years of service, or any age with 25 years of service, the additions being considered are, age 55 with 15 years of service, or age 57 with 5 years of service.

If you are not eligible for early-out retirement under the existing guidelines, but, assuming these modified guidelines become enacted within the next 12 months and you become eligible, how likely or unlikely is it that you would take early-out retirement? (CHECK ONE.) (37)

1. 108 I would not be eligible for early-out retirement under these modified guidelines
2. 29 Very likely
3. 26 Likely
4. 40 Uncertain
5. 22 Unlikely
6. 12 Very unlikely

39 Did not respond
72 Skipped as per Q19

22. Please refer to the eligibility requirements for regular retirement on page 5.

How long do you expect to stay in SES after you are eligible for regular retirement? (CHECK ONE.) (38)

1. 29 I plan to leave the federal government before I am eligible to retire
2. 115 Less than 6 months
3. 25 6 months to less than 1 year → (SKIP TO QUESTION 24.)
4. 24 1 to less than 3 years
5. 11 3 to less than 6 years
6. 8 6 years or more
7. 62 Unsure

3 Did not respond
71 Skipped as per Q19

23. How much longer do you intend to remain in the federal government before you retire? (CHECK ONE.) (39)

1. 2 Less than 6 months
2. 9 6 months to less than 1 year
3. 27 1 to less than 3 years
4. 9 3 to less than 6 years
5. 2 6 years or more
6. 22 Unsure

1 Did not respond
276 Skipped as per Q22

APPENDIX VI

IV. SATISFACTION-DISSATISFACTION WITH EMPLOYMENT IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

24. Listed below are a number of conditions related to your position. In your opinion, are these conditions too much, too little, or about right for you? (CHECK ONE BOX IN EACH ROW.)

	MUCH TOO MUCH (1)	TOO MUCH (2)	ABOUT RIGHT (3)	TOO LITTLE (4)	MUCH TOO LITTLE (5)	DID NOT RESPOND
JOB DEMANDS						
1. Amount of work job requires	27	99	206	11	3	2
2. Level of stress job creates	35	119	185	5	1	3
3. Amount of travel job requires	15	41	264	23	1	4
4. Number of hours job demands	40	108	194	3	0	3
JOB CONTENT						
5. Amount of challenge job presents	4	15	271	46	10	2
6. Level of significance of the job	6	11	266	48	11	6
7. Amount of time required for duties unrelated to your primary work	32	112	192	9	0	3

APPENDIX VI

25. Listed below are a number of factors relating to work in the federal government and in SES. Considering these factors as they exist today, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each as they apply to you? (CHECK ONE BOX IN EACH ROW.)

	VERY SATISFIED (1)	SATISFIED (2)	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED (3)	DISSATISFIED (4)	VERY DISSAT-ISFIED (5)	DID NOT RESPOND	
SALARY/BENEFITS/ JOB SECURITY							
1. Salary	2	63	41	152	89	1	(47)
2. Fringe benefits	3	85	74	133	50	3	(48)
3. Job security	33	194	94	20	5	2	(49)
SES BONUSES/AWARDS							
4. Availability of bonuses	8	67	55	115	100	3	(50)
5. Distribution of bonuses	7	51	60	109	118	3	(51)
6. Availability of Presidential rank awards	4	51	119	88	82	4	(52)
7. Distribution of Presidential rank awards	4	38	122	91	89	4	(53)

APPENDIX VI

(Question 25 continued -- Satisfaction-dissatisfaction with federal employment.)

	VERY SATISFIED (1)	SATISFIED (2)	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED (3)	DISSATISFIED (4)	VERY DISSATISFIED (5)	DID NOT RESPOND	
RESOURCES							
8. Availability of funding for training, travel, etc.	25	182	58	69	12	2	(54)
9. Adequacy of staffing	7	114	39	133	54	1	(55)
10. Adequacy of equipment provided to accomplish job	30	175	65	61	15	2	(56)
11. Allocation of resources among agency activities	7	135	95	94	16	1	(57)
12. Physical work environment	41	160	47	68	31	1	(58)
13. Ability to hire qualified staff	10	92	46	130	70	0	(59)
14. Ability to retain qualified staff	9	109	56	118	55	1	(60)
AGENCY STAFF COMPETENCE							
15. Subordinate staff	88	167	41	47	3	2	(61)
16. Co-workers	72	201	48	21	2	4	(62)
17. Supervisor	99	157	41	29	18	4	(63)
18. Top management	56	144	67	58	21	2	(64)
19. Political appointees	28	86	123	54	49	8	(65)

APPENDIX VI

(Question 25 continued -- Satisfaction-dissatisfaction with federal employment.)

	VERY SATISFIED (1)	SATISFIED (2)	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED (3)	DISSATISFIED (4)	VERY DISSATISFIED (5)	DID NOT RESPOND	
AGENCY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES							
20. Amount of political influence of others over agency operations	12	80	124	91	38	3	(66)
21. General agency policies	13	158	106	55	13	3	(67)
22. Agency management practices	12	143	90	80	19	4	(68)
23. Amount of freedom given to manage job as you see fit	46	190	42	52	15	3	(69)
24. Involvement in agency's decision making process	35	148	72	75	15	3	(70)
25. Communications in the agency	15	147	80	80	23	3	(71)
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT							
26. Working within the government's administrative system (e.g., paperwork, regulations)	0	61	83	151	50	3	(72)
27. Perceptions of federal workers by the press, politicians, and the public	0	5	25	128	186	4	(73)
28. Provisions of the Ethics-In-Government Act	4	116	141	61	23	3	(74)
29. Financial disclosure requirements	4	111	136	59	33	4	(75)
30. Proposed and actual changes to benefit programs (e.g., retirement)	0	18	91	134	100	5	(76)
31. Proposed and actual changes to salaries	0	15	50	148	151	4	(77)

APPENDIX VI

(Question 25 continued -- Satisfaction-dissatisfaction with federal employment.)

	VERY SATISFIED (1)	SATISFIED (2)	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED (3)	DISSATISFIED (4)	VERY DISSATISFIED (5)	DID NOT RESPOND	
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT/ GOALS/EXPECTATIONS							
32. Opportunities for career development (i.e., growing through the job)	22	169	85	61	8	3	(78)
33. Opportunities for career advancement (i.e., higher level of responsibility)	19	123	103	82	17	4	(79)
34. Match between your personal goals and values and those of the organization	57	169	73	52	13	4	(80)
35. Match between your aptitude, abilities, or interests and those the job requires	74	189	45	28	9	3	(81)
36. Match between your expectations of your job and the reality of the job	42	177	67	49	10	3	(82)
ASSIGNMENTS/MOBILITY							
37. Availability of desired assignments	20	133	107	65	18	5	(83)
38. Availability of desired geographic reassignments	20	107	162	38	16	5	(84)
39. Ability to avoid undesirable geographic reassignment	21	133	153	24	10	7	(85)
40. Ability to avoid undesirable reassignment within the same geographic area	21	140	139	32	9	7	(86)

APPENDIX VI

V. OVERVIEW

IF YOU BECAME AN SES MEMBER ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 1986 ⟶ CONTINUE WITH QUESTION 26

IF YOU BECAME AN SES MEMBER AFTER OCTOBER 1, 1986 ⟶ SKIP TO QUESTION 28

26. Taking into account the factors covered in Part IV (questions 24 and 25), in your opinion, have these factors improved, stayed about the same, or worsened in the past 12 months? (CHECK ONE BOX IN EACH ROW.)

SKIPPED PER INST.	FACTORS	GREATLY IMPROVED (1)	IMPROVED (2)	STAYED ABOUT THE SAME (3)	WORSENED (4)	GREATLY WORSENED (5)	DID NOT RESPOND
25	1. Job demands	1	15	217	71	17	2
25	2. Job content	1	31	244	32	13	2
25	3. Salary/benefits/ job security	0	21	181	90	29	2
25	4. SES bonuses/awards	1	16	201	70	32	3
25	5. Resources	0	21	160	125	14	3
25	6. Agency staff competence	0	22	231	65	3	2
25	7. Agency management practices	2	32	202	72	12	2
25	8. Government employment	0	2	161	139	18	3
25	9. Personal development/ goals/expectations	1	23	248	41	8	2
25	10. Assignments/mobility	0	11	278	26	6	2

27. Thinking back over the past 12 months in the SES, do you believe your overall work environment (i.e., the factors listed above) has improved, stayed about the same, or worsened during that time period? (CHECK ONE.)

(97)

1. 1 Greatly improved
2. 27 Improved
3. 182 Stayed about the same
4. 95 Worsened
5. 15 Greatly worsened

3 Did not respond

25 Skipped as per Instructions

APPENDIX VI

28. Overall, would you advise someone beginning a career to go into the public or private sector? (CHECK ONE.) (98)

1. 6 Strongly advise the public sector over the private sector
2. 38 Advise the public sector over the private sector
3. 73 Undecided
4. 118 Advise the private sector over the public sector
5. 108 Strongly advise the private sector over the public sector

5 Did not respond

29. If you have any additional comments regarding any previous question or general comments concerning your employment in SES, please use the space provided below. If necessary, use additional sheets. (99)

186 No comments
162 Comments

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.
PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED SURVEY IN THE ENCLOSED PRE-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE.

OCD-SMK-11/87

(966312)

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